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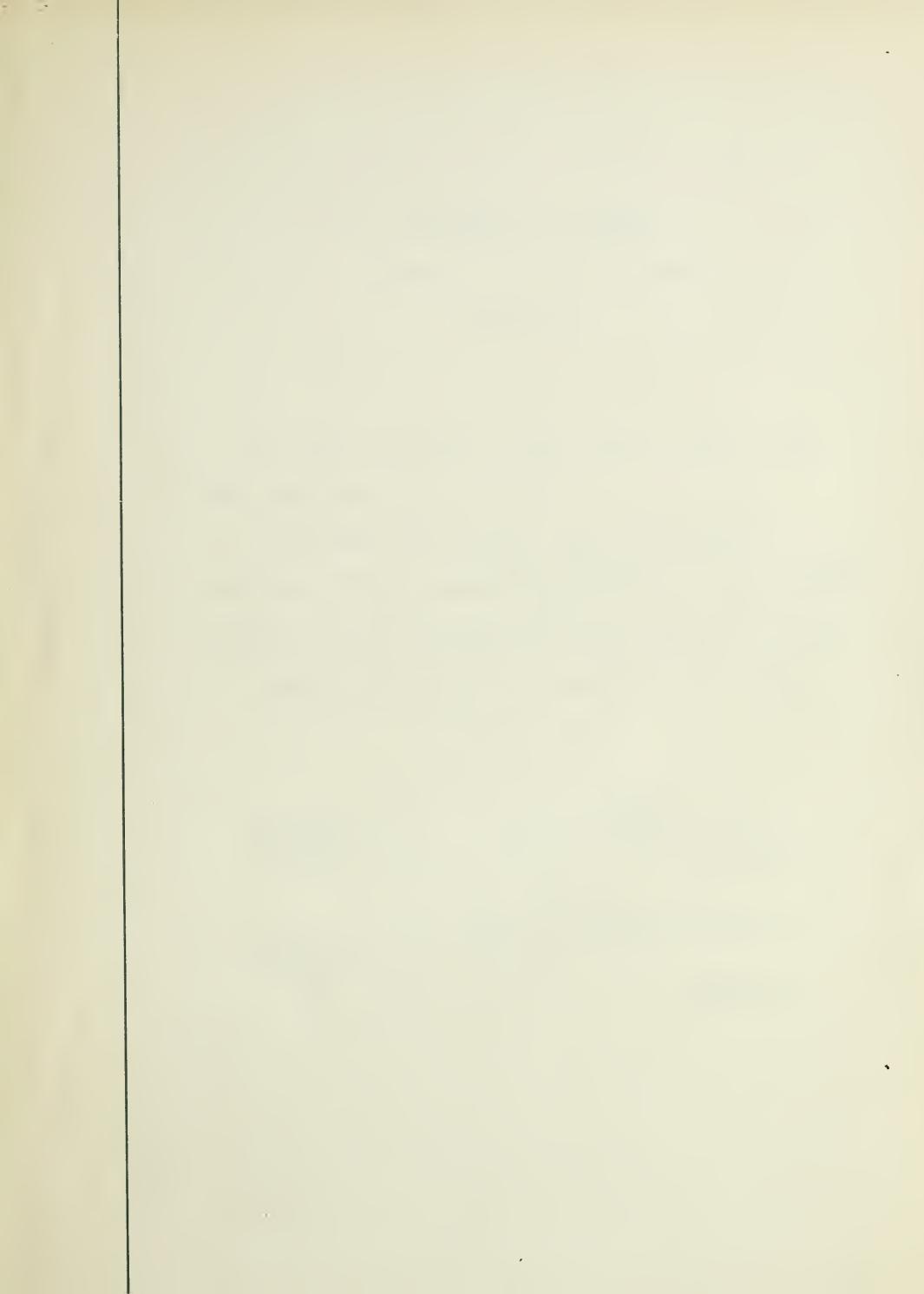
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF SACRIFICE

A THESIS

Submitted to the B.D. Committee
in candidacy for the degree of
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

by

THOMAS BRUCE McDORMAND

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper is one that carries us back into the earliest beginnings of recorded history and beyond. Prehistoric data has, in recent years, been brought to light by anthropologists and archaeologists to throw further light than written historical records could do. Our theme carries us back into the very heart of the beginnings of religion. The word 'sacrifice' is derived from the Latin, sacrificium, which in turn is a compound of sacer, meaning holy, and facere, to make. Hence, Hubert and Mauss were probably quite accurate when they described sacrifice as "a religious act, which, by the consecration of a victim, modifies the moral state of the sacrificer or of certain material objects which he had in view."¹ Sacrifice in all its range of forms from the most primitive to the most complex is always an expression of man's eternal quest for God, of his desire to enjoy the fellowship, forgiveness, and guidance of the Eternal Spirit. J.J. Reeve expresses this thought in a sentence when he says, "The notion of sacrifice arose out of the religious instincts of the human heart."²

However crude or materialistic sacrifice at certain stages in its development may appear it always bears evidence of the inexplicable fact that man is a creature of two worlds and that he is not at

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article on "Sacrifice"

2 International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia P. 2639

home on the earth until he is at home with God while on the earth. Through sacrifice men have sought to assure themselves of the presence of God in their midst. Through sacrifice they have sought to assure their particular deity or deities of their aspirations, gratitude, trust, penitence, loyalty, and sense of dependence on Him. (This note of caution should be struck, however, that we must be careful not to find theistic references in all ancient sacrifices, for sometimes they consisted largely of purely magical rites)

The sacrificial rites of primitive people represented their way of establishing between themselves and the unseen world of spirits some commerce and communion.

As we follow the subject of sacrifice down the long evolutionary road it has travelled we should ever keep in mind the fact that we are observing the unfolding of a splendid reality which, beginning in elemental germinal form, developed by slow degrees through great diversities of form and motive into institutions from which men have derived inspiration for the highest degree of ethical life, and through which they have enjoyed the most intimate and meaningful communion with God. In following the development of sacrifice we follow the pathway of mankind as it moves from "dust to destiny."

William Herbert Carruth wrote:

A fire mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And caves where the cavemen dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the cloud-
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

And in this progressive process which has carried men so far on the road to larger life the institution of sacrifice deserves a conspicuous and honored place.

CHAPTER I

THE EARLIER ORIGINS OF SACRIFICE.

Our knowledge of primitive forms of sacrifice is, from a research standpoint, scanty. The remotest origins are veiled in prehistoric obscurity. And yet we have sufficient data to trace the basic motives which lay behind the more elementary forms of sacrificial rites. And as we study in this chapter the record of earlier sacrificial practices we shall be impressed by the fact that there are constant suggestions of the concepts around which the higher sacrificial customs of centuries later revolved.

We shall first point out several forms of worship as found among primitive peoples, and shall then examine certain theories of the origin of sacrifice which have been propounded in comparatively recent years.

TOTEMISM.¹

Totemism has prevailed among barbarian peoples in many and widely scattered portions of the globe. It has been a prominent feature in the life of the Arunta tribes of Central Australia, the Red Indians of North America, the Eskimo, the Polynesians, and the non-Aryan peoples of India. Traces of it are found in Central and South America, and among the Bantu tribes of Africa. It would thus appear that Totemism was a very general institution among primitive peoples.

¹ Our sources of information on Totemism are the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

Totems were essentially species of plants or animals . Occasionally inanimate natural objects (rain, cloud, star, sun,&c.) served as totems. The totem is always attached to a social group or a clan, and the relation between the totem and group is one of friendship and alliance. Fundamentally the origin of Totemism represents an expression of early man's sense of kinship with the natural world. "Totemism has its various sides-religious, social,
¹ magical. These were in origin undistinguished from one another."
"The relation of the clan to its totem assumes a mystical aspect and generates an intense feeling of kinship The Totem
² was regarded with reverence and looked to for help." Members of the totemic clan called themselves by the name of their totem, and in many cases possessed badges, emblems, or crests, which represented the totem or some part of it. These insignia were drawn or tattooed on the body or carved on weapons, canoes, houses, &c. Such practices indicate a clansman's desire to identify himself with his totem. In Australia and the Malay Peninsula the members of totemic clans believe themselves to have actually descended from a mythical half-human, half-animal ancestor alike of the totem and themselves. Such a belief constitutes a real social bond since the clansmen regard one another as kinsmen.

The treatment of totems varies widely. The respect of some

¹ Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, p.406

² Ibid. p.406

clansmen for their totem prevents them from killing and eating it. In other cases a clansman is forbidden to touch the totem or even to look at it except on rare occasions when the head of the tribe sacrificially slays and eats the totem. In the totemism of the Arunta (Central Australia) the natives eat their totems in order to gain magical powers to increase the stock of the totem animal.

The totemism which we have discussed thus far represents a very primitive form. Among more civilized peoples totemism incorporated some comparatively advanced practices. And what is of particular interest to us is the fact that sacrifice appears. A striking instance of this very primitive sacrifice among totemic tribes is seen in W. Robertson Smith's description of the milus rite among the Arabs.¹ The principle feature of this rite was the sacrifice of the sacred camel. The camel chosen was bound, still living, upon a rude altar of stones. After the leader of the band has led the worshipers around the altar three times he inflicts the first wound² and drinks in all haste of the gushing blood. Immediately the whole company fall on the victim with their swords, hacking off pieces of the quivering flesh and eating them raw in such haste that, in the short period between the rise of the day star and the rising of the sun, the entire camel, body and bones, skin, blood and entrails, is wholly devoured.³

1 The Religion of the Semites, p. 358.

2 Oehler in "Old Testament Theology" states that the "bursting of the blood" is the essential thing.

3 Note how primitive are the times to which such New Testament words as these ~~mark~~ back, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man ye have no life in you." (John 6:53)

By eating the "living flesh" the worshipers felt that they had absorbed the victim's life into themselves. Smith says, "One sees how much more forcibly than any ordinary meal such a rite expresses the establishment or confirmation of a bond of common life between the worshipers, and also, since the blood is shed upon the altar itself, between the worshipers and their god."¹

In this ceremony we have striking evidence of the~~s~~ similarities between certain Hebrew sacrifices and those of more primitive peoples.

We pass on to consider certain early Australian rites which bear a close resemblance to sacrifice. Just as the German reaper left the last ears of corn to Woden, so the Australian blacks offer a portion of their find or wild honey. In New South Wales spears and pebbles are offered, and in Queensland painful wounds are made upon the body by the removal of strips of skin. Such customs suggest the early existence of the concept of gift sacrifices to the spirits.

An early suggestion of blood sacrifice is found among the Arunta tribes in their intichiuma ceremony where blood from the veins of selected young men is allowed to run over the two sacred "kangaroo rocks" (one representing the male kangaroo and one the² female, the kangaroo being the totemic animal of these tribes.)

1 W.R.Smith, "The Religion of the Semites", p. 338.

2 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article on Totemism. A possible reflection of this very primitive form of sacrifice is seen in the custom among the early Hebrews of pouring blood upon an upright stone (mass ebhad). Genesis 28:18 refers to this custom.

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Spencer and Gillan affirm in a paper to the Journal of the Anthropological Institute that the one essential feature of these ceremonies is the necessity of identifying himself closely with the totem. The effect of this sacramental union is the neutralization or expulsion of the evil in man by contact with his supernatural ally. In this intichiuma ceremony we have evidence to substantiate the claim of Jevons³ that "the core of worship is communion- that, at least, is the fundamental concept underlying the most rudimentary forms of sacrifice."²

CELTIC SACRIFICE.

Caesar in his "Gallic Wars" speaks of the religion of the Celts. In times of illness men would sacrifice or promise to sacrifice human victims in the belief that a life would be spared for a life given. Evil doers were sacrificed by impalement every five years. Plutarch and Tacitus speak of the Gauls offering the blood of captives. The blood of the first prisoner of war was especially prized for sacrifice.⁴ Celtic sacrifice was largely piacular (expiatory)- regarding human sacrifice as especially pleasing to God. The origin of this idea, as abundant evidence shows, goes back to a deeper stratum of human history than the development of anthropomorphical deities.

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article on Sacrifice.

2 A distinction between Australian forms of sacrifice and more advanced forms lies in the fact that the animal is regarded as naturally sacred, whereas in later forms of sacrifice it acquires this character ritualistically.

3 Introduction to the History of Religion, p. 225.

4 Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

HINDU SACRIFICES.

The Hindu sacrificial system is very elaborate, making detailed provisions concerning the place, the victim, the officiant, and the objects of the sacrifice. It is interesting to note a relection of the more advanced prophetic Hebrew views of sacrifice in the attitude of Buddhism toward externalism in sacrificial ritual.

1. It judged such ritual to be the futile expression of misdirected effort.
2. It regarded some forms of sacrifice as cruel.
3. It regarded the benefits as not sufficiently spiritual.

These lines translated from the Samyutta are enlightening:

"The sacrifices called the Horse, the Man,
The Peg-Thrown Site, the Drink of Victory,
The Bolts withdrawn, and all the mighty fuss—
These are not rites that bring a rich result."

Thus among the Hindus many centuries before Christ we observe the spiritualizing of sacrifice going on.

GREEK SACRIFICES.

All sacrifices of the Hellenic period were denoted by the word *θυσία*, indicating a direct reference to deity.

Bloodless offerings were common. Cereals, vegetables, fruits, as necessary elements of human nourishment, were natural oblations to the gods of vegetative growth and fertility—such as Demeter (the earth-mother), Dionysus, Poseidon, Heracles. Usually such oblations were pure gifts offered partly for thanksgiving and partly to secure continued blessings in the year to come.

1 See C.A.F.Rhys Davids in Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Article on Sacrifice, vol. II, pp. 7-8.

Sacrificial rites were also held to remove tabus from new fields in order to make them fit for the use of man. In the Greek blood offerings there are evidences of a belief in the establishment of a mystic connection between the victim and the divine power to whom it is consecrated on the altar. The sacrificial animal thus mediates divine power.

Oath sacrifices were common in Greece. Such a sacrifice bound the parties to an oath to its observance, the penalty of its violation being some drastic punishment by the deity to whom the sacrifice is offered. There is in this a suggestion at least of ethical demands upon man by the deity.

In general, the current view of Greek sacrifice was that it represented a gift to the gods. A higher view than this emerges in Greek literature and philosophy. Even the Delphic oracle was supposed to encourage the idea that the simplest offering of the poor man was as acceptable as the lavish sacrifice by the rich of a hundred beasts upon a hundred altars.

PERSIAN SACRIFICES.

In Persian sacrifices offerings were frequently brought into relation with sin. In fact the Pahlavi literature speaks of the vicarious or atoning nature of sacrifice. In the later developments of Persian sacrifice it was felt that the gods needed only the soul of an animal, not its flesh and blood.

SACRIFICE IN EGYPT.

In all probability sacrifices and sacrificial systems existed in

Egypt from the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C. As to the nature of Egyptian sacrificial practices our most important evidence is in the record of pictures. At Dei-el-Bahri there are pictures of animals having their throats cut in Mohammedan fashion. Burnt, grain, and peace offerings predominated. Oxen, wild goats, pigs, geese were the chief animals offered. There were no human sacrifices. An important feature of the Egyptian sacrificial system is found in the central shrines to which people came from many miles around to offer their sacrifices. We note the influence of the Egyptians upon the Hebrews as we think of the place of Jerusalem as the central shrine of worship for the Israelites.

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BABYLONIAN SACRIFICE.

As early as 3000B.C. there were many centres of worship in Babylonia such as Ur, Nisin, Agade, &c. Elaborate systems of sacrifices prevailed. Over one hundred temples are mentioned on inscriptions and several hundreds in the literature of the times. Animal and vegetable sacrifices were constantly offered. The sacrifices provided an income for the priests, as did the Mosaic at a later time. In some of the larger centres animals were offered twice a day, morning and evening. At these sacrifices certain portions were burned on the altar, the rest belonging to the priests. We cannot doubt that Moses made use of many elements found in the Egyptian and Babylonian systems, adding to or subtracting from them as circumstances required.

Before leaving our consideration of early sacrifice among non-Hebrew people we should give some attention to the matter of human sacrifices, for these represented man's most extravagant gifts to the gods, and prevailed among tribes and nations widely scattered in respect of both time and place.

(a) In Greece and Rome outcasts were held to be sacrificed in times of national calamity. Two were chosen, one for the men and one for the women, and were stoned to death as a means of expelling evil.

(b) In India many human sacrifices were offered. Of these the most important was the suttee- the burning of a widow upon the funeral pyre of her husband. This was usually voluntary and was regarded as a mark of ideal wifely devotion. This practice prevailed until 1829 when it was banned by the British Government. The Khond sacrifice was also common in cases of illness. The human victim was either the son of the afflicted individual or a person purchased for the occasion.

(c) Human sacrifice was particularly prominent among certain African tribes and remains so to this day. In the Dahomey area of West Africa human sacrificial practices are of great interest to us because of the nature of the three forms they took. They were as follows: (1) The scapegoat, (2) The messenger, (3) The expiation. Often the people transferred their sins by laying hands on the victim as it was lead in procession. To-day the blood of victims is sometimes smeared on the sacrificer, or on the door-posts of the homes. The striking similarity of such a ritual to the Hebrew

least the significant place sacrifice has played in the social and religious life of many primitive and many more civilized peoples. We also feel that the content of foregoing pages is sufficient to reveal that from time immemorial there has been a gradual development of those insights, ideas, and ideals which in course of time eventuated in those highly organized and socially important religions whose influence upon the life of mankind persists to this day.

In fact a number of reputable scholars in our day, such as Dr. Rudolph Bultmann of the University of Marburg, and Professor F.C. Grant of Chicago, have given much thought to the elaboration of the "Form History Criticism" theory. In kernel this theory affirms that the fundamental elements of man's religious experience have cropped out in earliest religions, and that there is a tendency for these elements to maintain fairly conventional forms at all times. This theory, which certainly holds within reasonable limits, warrants us in expecting to find among primitive sacrifices the same general forms that have survived in the practices of contemporary religions. We feel that our all too hasty survey of sacrifice among various peoples through the ages has served to draw attention to the fact that the views of sacrifice which ^{appear in} so exalted a form in the religion of the Hebrews, and of Christianity itself, were struggling for expression among those who offered sacrifices to the spirits, or to the gods of their faith, as gifts, as means of communion, as tokens of gratitude, and even as propitiation for sin. These major motives for sacrifice, which we shall study in more detail in the next chapter, appear in the earliest sacrifices of which we have any record.

CHAPTER 2

Original Ideas Behind Sacrifice

At this juncture it will be of value to indicate very briefly some of the outstanding theories as to the original ideas behind sacrifice.

Some hold that the custom of sacrifice had its origin in a divine revelation, that it was initiated by God himself at the beginnings of human history. Fairbairn, for example, in his "Typology" holds that the skins which Adam and Eve were clothed with were from animals which had been slain in sacrifices.¹ For this view we can establish no tenable basis, but it at least suggests the belief of reputable scholars in the extreme antiquity of animal sacrifices. Kidson makes a worthwhile comment in these words, "Its universal prevalence suggests that it must in some way have been a natural expression of man's sense of relation to God."²

Out of the considerable discussion that has revolved about the question of the original ideas behind the practice of sacrifice four theories deserve the leading place.

1. The gift theory.
2. The homage theory.
3. The communion theory.
4. The propitiatory, substitutionary, or piacular theory.

We shall outline the principal features in these four theories. It will be well for us to keep these constantly in mind as we pursue our later study of Hebrew sacrifice.

1 Quoted in International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, p. 2639
2 "The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," p. 306.

1. THE GIFT THEORY. Leading exponents of this theory are, H. Spenser, E. B. Tylor, H. H. Schultz, and G. F. Moore. This would seem to represent the earliest type of sacrifice. In the the words of Prof. Albert C. Knudson, "The gift theory regarded sacrifice as originally the gift offered to supernatural beings for the purpose of winning their favour and overcoming their hostility."¹ The offerers of a gift sacrifice took it for granted that their gifts would be received by the deity or spirit with pleasure and even gratification. Good relations were regarded as being re-established by such gift offerings. In fact the heathen people among whom we find the first evidences of gift sacrifices apparently believed that their gifts placed the god under obligation to favour them. It was as though he had accepted a bribe and was therefore obligated to fulfil the conditions which prompted its offering.² William Kelly Wright avers that by the gift sacrifice the pagan offerer sought to control the god-to force him to act at the worshipers' behest. Magical means were sometimes used to compel the god to meet the worshiper's demands.³ For example, in ancient Egypt the magicians claimed the power of compelling even the highest gods to do their bidding, threatening to destroy them in case of disobedience. Similarly in India today the great Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva is thought to be subject

1 Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p. 306

2 A Student's Philosophy of Religion, pp. 62-65

3 Ibid. 63.

to ~~sacr~~cery. In mediaeval times French peasants used to believe
that their priests by a special "Mass of the Holy Ghost" could
compel God to grant whatever was asked him. Socrates pointed out
that the Greek sacrifices were largely a pure business transaction.
In all gift sacrifices there was the idea held that if a man did
his part in the transaction the gods¹ would do theirs. This weird
confusion of religion and magic represents an elementary stage in
the evolution of the idea of sacrifice.

Behind the gift sacrifice there was also the belief that the
god, the fetish, the ancestral ghost, or the nature-spirit, as
the case might be, needed the sacrifice. ^{W^{right}}³ suggests that
the gift sacrifice often sought to strengthen the god so as to
enable him to continue his beneficent work. In India sacrifices
are still offered to the sun to strengthen it so that it will be
⁴ able to rise again the following morning.

This whole bargaining attitude behind the gift sacrifice
as
represented a very low concept of the deity, and there arose from
time to time more enlightened men they condemned the lower motives
which had prompted gift sacrifices. We shall note this conspicuously
in our reference later in this thesis to the writings of the Hebrew
prophets. Cicero, speaking in condemnation of certain types of
Greek sacrifice, said, "Let not the impious dare to appease the
gods with gifts. Let them harken to Plato, who warns them that

1

Encyclopaedia Britannica , Vol. 23, p. 982

2 Hastings', Dictionary of the Bible , Vol. 4, p. 351

3 A Student's Philosophy of Religion, p. 64

4 Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4, p. 351

there can be no doubt what the gods' disposition to them will be, since even a good man will refuse to accept presents from the wicked. "¹"

In concluding for the present our reference to the gift sacrifice we should observe that though it represents very primitive ideas and accounts for many heathen systems of sacrifice, it cannot be taken to help a great deal in our understanding of biblical sacrifice. And yet Buchanan Gray², very thorough student of Old Testament sacrifice is at great pains to show the extent to which the idea of gift was consciously associated with sacrifice among the Hebrews. Of this we shall hear more later.

THE HOMAGE THEORY This theory holds that sacrifices were originally acts of worship—"the embodied prayers of men who thought like children."³ They expressed the various feelings of dependence, reverence, thanksgiving, penitence, trust, with which men instinctively approach the higher powers.⁴ Many scholars are eloquent in their advocacy of this theory. To F. D. Maurice⁵ man, even in primitive times, felt naturally impelled to seek closer communion with God, not so much from any sense of guilt as from a sense of dependence and a desire to show obedience. To show this primitive man had recourse to acts rather than words. He thought in pictures, in terms of concrete things. Sacrifice was an active prayer—an expression of his longing, his reverence, and his submission.⁶

1 Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4, p. 332

2 Sacrifice in the Old Testament.

3 Kudson, "Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," p. 291

4 "The eucharistic conception of sacrifice, that is, as free from the desire to secure material benefits in the future, is seldom found in really primitive cults,"—Hastings', Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. III.

5 The Doctrine of Sacrifice. 6 International Bible Encyclopaedia, p. n

Obviously the homage theory represents, in instances where it is an adequate interpretation of sacrifices practiced, a much higher concept of God and of man's proper approach to him.

THE COMMUNION THEORY This designation is suggested by man's attempt to effect some sort of intercourse between himself and God so that man may be strengthened by the divine. This form of sacrifice probably had its first faint beginnings in totemism where there was a sort of identity between man and his totem that needed strengthening. Ancestral worship also had a part in promoting the idea ~~of~~ ¹ communion with the gods, the spirit-world, for a child felt strengthened by the feeling that a beloved ancestor was supporting him in his earthly efforts .

The brilliant exponent of the communion theory is W. Robertson Smith, with Wellhausen as an able contemporary. They propound their theory upon the basis of a study of totemism. In totemism the object of sharing the meal with the god (totem) was to renew the blood-bond. The victim was, in the beginning, the animal of a hostile totem-kin or "theanthropic animal". The god was originally a stranger taken into the kin by a rite of blood brotherhood.⁴

Smith interpreted ancient sacrifice, Greek as well as Semitic, as a communion feast with the deity in which the god and his people became one flesh by partaking of the same food, or the flesh of a

1 Wright, "A Student's Philosophy of Religion." (Quoted in International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, p. 2641)

2 L. R. Farrell, article in Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. (Article on "Sacrifice")

3 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 23, p. 982

4 Ibid. p. 982

con on victim, the animal being regarded as in a degree divine (at least as sharing with man the divine life.) Smith and others drew the corollary that were the view of sacrifice as a gift or bribe to the god prevailed it was a later degeneracy of religion, possible only when the sense of communion had faded from the ceremony.

At this communion feast, according to its practice among savage nations, they literally "ate the god" and thus incorporated into themselves the physical, intellectual, and moral qualities which the animal was supposed to have (in as much as the divine life was thought to dwell in the sacred animal). Sometimes the worshipers drank the blood and thus imbibed the divine life. Among the Arabs of ancient times the sacred camel was eaten by the worshipers who devoured the still quivering flesh before the animal was really dead, and the entire carcass had to be eaten before morning.¹ This common meal was regarded by the Arabians as binding the people together. The out-poured blood of the sacrificial meal cemented the union between the deity and his people. It was a renewal of the blood-bond with the deity. In this we find a foreshadowing of the social function of religion.²

Although this theory doubtless represents an important aspect of sacrifice in the course of this development, it is probably not an explanation of the origin of sacrifice. Many scholars, led in the main by L. Marillier, have criticized W. R. Smith's position on these grounds. And yet there seem excellent grounds for the

1. Supra p. 6
2. "

belief that the idea of communion prevailed from comparatively early times, and represented the finest of the motives and instincts out of which the practice of sacrifice grew.

THE PROPITIATORY, PIACULAR, OR SUBSTITUTIONARY THEORY

Still another theory respecting the original meaning of sacrifice is the **piacular**. This type of sacrifice arose out of the need of atoning for bloodshed within the kinship group. Properly speaking the culprit should suffer, but should he be unknown or beyond reach of vengeance a substitute had to be found. This was naturally found in the non-human member of the totem-kin,¹ the totem-animal in a sense. Thus "the god died for his people". The penalty due the sinner was inflicted on the sacrificial animal. The object of the piaculum was the re-establishment of a broken alliance. (In this fact we detect a marked similarity in motive to that of the communion sacrifice.)

This theory of the origin of sacrifice is especially interesting and has wide support. Hubert and Mauss admit that in all sacrifices there are suggestions of purchase and substitution.²

³ Westermarck makes the original idea in sacrifice a substitute for the offerer (that is, a piaculum). This would find little support ^{however,} ⁴ today. W. K. Wright affirms that the piacular significance of sacrifice appears upon a very early savage level where there is the tribal feeling that the god is angry and demands blood. This often involved magical rites. The sins and curses that have afflicted

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 23, p. 983.

2 From J. J. Reeve in International Bible ~~and~~ Encyclopaedia.

3 " " " " " "

4 A Student's Philosophy of Religion

the group may be magically transferred to the sacrificial victims and consumed with them in the fire, or loaded upon a scapegoat and driven into the wilderness.

Reference should be made in passing to A.B. Davidson's objection to the claim that propitiatory sacrifice represents too advanced a stage of ethical thought for primitive man. Most authorities dispute Dr. Davidson's findings, declaring upon the contrary that the thought of propitiation represents a very simple and primitive stage. The sense of sin and its penalty is an instinct as old as the race. Views regarding what constitutes sin have gone through many modifications, but the sense of sin is never absent from people of greatest antiquity.¹ Prof. Davidson's objection is that primitive sacrifices were preponderantly joyous in character and could not therefore represent an expiation. But this objection is met by the fact that in most cases joyous feasts followed the killing of the animal by which the expiation was accomplished. The feast was joyous because atonement had been made.²

On the whole we may conclude that the idea of propitiation is present, in germ at least, in many of the sacrifices of primitive man. In its higher forms, of course, it belongs to our own age, but these forms represent the culmination of ideas which go back in essence to very early beginning.

1 W.K. Wright, "The Origin of Moral Ideas."

2 Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4, p. 331

As a concluding word in this section we can do no better than quote a paragraph from Prof. A. C. Knudson : "These different theories may at first seem quite distinct from each other, and it may seem necessary to make a choice of some one to the exclusion of the others. But it is not improbable that there is truth in more than one of them, and that each represents a factor or motive which at an early date was associated with the custom of sacrifice.¹ To pass from one of these motives to another was not difficult." This view is in harmony with the philosophical position laid down by Edward Caird, that there is in the human mind, in germ, a faint glimpse of all that emerges in the later speculations of philosophy² and practices of religion.

It might be of value to quote further G. B. Stevens' lucid extension of Knudson's statement. Steven says, "Let us assume the correctness of the simplest theory of sacrifice, the gift theory. But the idea of a present to the deity is itself an act of homage or worship. The gift of what has value for the giver is made in recognition of the superior rights or claims of the divinity. And this idea of homage, in turn, would naturally deepen into the feeling of fellowship or communion. If the offered gift is regarded as sacred; if, for example, the idea obtains that there is some mysterious connection between the life of the divinity and the life or blood of the animal, then the conviction will

1 Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p 307.

2 The Development of Religion.

naturally arise that in offering the animal in sacrifice the worshiper enters into communion with the Power whom he would honor. Then, again, when the sense of sin is deepened in men; when the conception of the divine holiness arises and man appreciates the moral separation between himself and the deity, it will then be natural that sacrifice should assume a more distinct reference to sin. It will become the means whereby sin is confessed and reconciliation with the offended deity sought. Thus it would naturally happen that gifts, which in a more naive religious condition were merely presents, should come to be regarded as the means of a mystic communion or even as a cover or protection from the displeasure felt by the deity toward the sins of its worshipers.¹"

We now pass on to consider the sacrificial system of the Hebrews as indicated in the writings of the Old Testament, period. The subject matter of the foregoing pages has been selected for the purpose of providing a historical background for a more intelligent study of Hebrew sacrifice. Hence we may expect to encounter ideas which we have already considered in their general reference, but our concern with such ideas will be in respect to their specific significance in the sacrificial system of Judaism through the centuries.

We need scarcely be reminded of the influence of environment upon the development of the Hebrew institutions of religion. Before the great trek to Canaan Egyptian influence would be

1 The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, pp. 6-7

inevitable. During their nomadic life in the desert they doubtless came in contact with, and to some degree adopted, nomadic ways of living and of worshiping. In the land of Canaan they were profoundly effected by adjacent Canaanite and Babylonian civilizations with which they came in constant contact in the formative period of their national life. Later on Persian and Greek influences made themselves felt. These patent facts prepare us for the recurrence in Jewish life of sacrificial customs markedly suggestive of sacrificial customs which we have already referred to. By way of illustration we might cite the Hebrew adoption during a certain period of the Canaanite infant sacrifice; and the Moabite ¹ban of destruction which involved the complete destruction after victory in battle of all of the enemy—men, women, and children, together ²with their flocks and herds. The Phoenician sacrifice of baked ³cakes was also employed.

1 Micah 6:7

2 Deuteronomy 6:19, 7:16

3 Numbers 15:20

CHAPTER 5

A RAPID SURVEY OF THE TYPES AND DEVELOPMENT OF SACRIFICE AMONG THE HEBREW PEOPLE

It might be of value that the outset to set down certain terms which occur with frequency in the Old Testament records. (The first word in each case is a transliteration of the original Hebrew term.) Zebhah, "sacrifice"; 'ôlāh, "burnt offering"; hâta'âh, "sin offering"; 'âshâm, "guilt" or "trespass offering"; minhâh, "offering present"; zebhah shelâmîm, "sacrifice of peace offerings"; zebhah ha-tôdhâh, "thankofferings"; zebhah nêdhâbhâh, "free-will offerings"; zebhah nedher, "votive offerings"; korbân, "oblation"; "gift"; kâlel, "whole burnt offering"; 'ishshah, "fire offering"; k'tôreth, "odor", "incense". The very extent of this list points quite clearly to the fact that we cannot, in the compass of this paper, deal in any exhaustive way with the sacrificial customs and laws of the Hebrews. We shall only attempt to touch upon the more salient features of them.

1

Buchanan Gray reminds us that these Hebrew terms were very specific in their use and that our English versions usually give them a much freer rendering than their strict etymology would warrant. Dr. Gray says, "In any discussion of Hebrew sacrifice the question of the range of a term always arises. Should a term, for example, include all gifts at the altar, or only animal victims; and again should it include certain ceremonial slayings of animals which had not been presented on the altar?"
2

Furthermore, in considering the bearing of terms on current

1 Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 19

2 Ibid. p.19

ideas, the actual usage of any given period is of far more importance than etymology. Etymology cannot be given to much weight as against usage. In illustrating this principle Buchanan Gray cites the words, minhāh, and korbān. In earlier literature minhāh is the term used for sacred gifts and sacrifices, in later literature korbān is used almost exclusively.¹ In summarizing a lengthy passage dealing with the usages and etymology of the leading Hebrew sacrificial terms, Dr. Gray concludes with these words, "The specific Hebrew terms are largely represented in the English versions by some compound expression containing the word offering, such as "burnt offering". But the idea of offering is not directly conveyed by any of the special terms, largely because the Hebrew language does not create compound words. The special terms for sacrifice have for the most part referred to the treatment of the object, whether simply slain, or also burnt; to the occasion on which it was offered; or to a state, such as that of guilt, in reference to which the sacrifice was offered."²

Having suggested some of the more common sacrificial terms found in the Old Testament, and having set forth the point of view from which the Old Testament sacrificial terms in general must be regarded, it now becomes our task to speak of the nature of sacred gifts and sacrifices offered at various periods in Hebrew history. In dealing with this theme we shall have frequent recourse to Buchanan Gray as our chief source of authority, in as much as he has done widely recognized research work in this particular field.

1 Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 17

2 Ibid. p. 9

Sacred gifts consisted chiefly of foods- animals, and vegetables (especially cereals). These were given by man and received by Yahweh (In Numbers 28:2 Yahweh is reported as saying, "my food").

The idea of food offerings goes back to crude anthropomorphic views of God where he was actually thought to eat food. The Babylonian Bels were also thought by their worshipers to eat meat , meal, and wine placed nightly upon ~~this~~ table. In J, the earliest Penteteuchal document, it is recorded that "Yahweh smelt the ¹soothing savour Noah's burnt offering." David though Yahweh ²smelt sacred gifts, and Jotham believed that Yahweh, like ~~is~~ men, ³was made happy by wine. But later the sacred gifts were treated ⁴differently. They were still "given by man and received by God" , but not for his own use, rather as intended for human representatives or proxies - the priests, the poor, and to some extent the worshipers themselves. In practice, therefore, certain parts of the gift ⁵offerings were used by special classes of men, and those parts of the gifts which were subject to ritual were actually destroyed (burnt) and used by ~~no one~~. In all of our discussion we must bear in mind that in the case of an animal sacrifice the blood and fat were thought of as belonging ~~is~~ exclusively ^{to} God regardless of what use was made of the rest. The blood was poured out at the base of the altar, after certain ritual use had been made of it (such as smearing it upon the horns of the altar), and the fat was burned upon the altar.

1 Genesis 8:21; 2 1 Samuel 26:19; 3 Judges 9:13

4 Supra p. 28

5 Minḥāh, 'olāh, zebḥah, nēdhebhāh.

The fat or the entrails was regarded as especially acceptable to the god¹, and among early Australian and African tribes (as well as among people of higher civilizations) the kidney fat was treated with particular care, for this was regarded by the Semites as the seat of the emotions. The Hebrew law prohibited the eating of the fat of entrails and directed that it² be burnt ceremonially upon the altar. It is interesting to note how this law harks back to primitive customs.

A detailed list of the articles to be offered to Yahweh for all purposes is found in Leviticus 1 - 7, and in Numbers 18; 8-22 is found a list of sacred gifts in particular. Part or all of these might be presented in various forms of burnt offerings³, peace offerings⁴, and guilt offerings⁵. Cereal food must be unleavened if burnt, but might under certain circumstances be leavened⁶, or cereals could be merely parched grain.

Conspicuous among sacred gifts were first-fruits, and the first-born (not only of kine, sheep and goats, but also of man). The presentation of the first born could be by computation or by redemption. What was actually given to Yahweh was a fixed sum of money per head. The ass was regarded as unclean, and could not be offered directly or burned, so two alternatives were open;

- (a) It could be redeemed by the offering of a young sheep or goat.
- (b) Its neck could be broken so as to make it of no use to man, even though not offered to God.

1 Cf. W. R. Smith, Religion of the Semites, p.280-283.

2 Lev. 1:3; 3 Lev. 3:1,6; 4 Numbers 18:9; 5 Lev. 2:12, 23:17

6 Lev. 2:14-16

A distinct sanctity attached to the first-born. "The first-born shalt thou give unto me." "All that openeth the womb is mine."¹ The first-born fell into three classes:²

1. The first-born of clean animals.
2. The first-born of unclean animals.
3. The first-born of men.

In the earliest law the first-born of clean animals were sacrificed to Yahweh upon the eighth day after birth. The Deuteronomic law is not so clear, however, On the one hand the first-born is not killed on the eighth day but is subject to certain restrictions, as potentially given to Yahweh, such as not being allowed to be worked; or, in the case of sheep, the wool should not be shorn and used. On the other hand when, at the end of the year, the gift was completed by slaughter the carcass was not wholly burned at the altar but was eaten as a sacred meal before Yahweh by the owner. Later the unburned portions went to the priests.³ So we note that animals subjected to sacrificial rites were not always ^{and} wholly gifts to God.⁴ We have already referred⁵ to the case of the first-born of unclean animals. They were either redeemed by a clean animal, or withdrawn from man's use. After it was redeemed its taboo was removed. Thus the idea of inherent sanctity is breaking down. In a later stage, represented by the writings of P, redemption by a clean animal is replaced by the payment of a money tax.⁶ In the case of the first-born of man the earliest laws provided for redemption. A classic example of this is in the case of the redemption of Isaac⁷ by the ram caught in the thicket. Later laws made it clear- the

1 Exod. 22:28f; 2 Exod. 34:19; 3 Num. 18:15-17f; 4 Supra p. 29

5 Above, this page; 6 Exod. 13:13, 34:20. 7 Gen. 22:13

first-born of man were redeemed by five shekels (twelve shillings)
¹
ahead, and this went to the priest .

In earlier times by a vow other persons could be given to
²
Yehweh. The sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter is a case in point .

Later, vowed persons could be redeemed or commuted by money as

follows: Males 20 - 60 years, fifty shekels (£. 6)

Males 5 - 20 years, twenty shekels.

Females one-half the "rate" for males.

In this we observe further evidence of the trend away from inherent sanctity to a tax calculation. A striking reference to this fact is seen in the decree of the oral law that the minimum value of all ~~guilt~~³ offerings (except that of the Nazarite or Leper) must be two shekels.

Offerings of first fruits other than animal did not merely apply to vegetables and cereals but to a much larger list including such things as honey, figs, grapes, pomegranates, and so on.

Where tithes and sacred dues were levied the smallest produce items were included. A striking suggestion of this is Jesus' reference to the "tithing of mint, anice, and cummin".
⁴
⁵

Similarly ~~leaven~~⁶ was forbidden in what was to be burned on the altar, but definitely included in certain other things where a part is not to be burned on the altar , while the remainder, according to the Mishnah, was to be eaten by the offerer.

At this point we should consider the question, "What is the differentia between a sacrifice and a sacred gift?" The answer is that "the least differentia would consist in the fact that a sacrifice is a gift presented with some ritual."
⁷

1 Numbers 8:16; 2 Judges 11:39; 3 ~~E~~bahim 10:5; 4 See foot-note 1,
5 Matthew 23:28, 6 Lev. 7:11f; 7 Buchanan Gray, "Sacrifice in p.28
the Old Testament", 28

We may well, therefore, briefly classify Hebrew gifts according to the alter-ritual that accompanied their presentation to Yahweh.

(1) There were certain gifts without ritual, such as money,^{1b} and contributions in kind made direct to the priests. The Mishnah goes into great detail in defining such gifts.

It is not difficult to note the continuation of the de-ritualizing process, evidences of which we have referred to ~~be~~² before.

For example, in Numbers 18 certain gifts are given directly to the priests, whereas the first-fruits are brought to Yahweh;³ that is, they were presented with ritual before going to the priests.⁴ A difference between gifts given and brought is creeping in.

In the passage of Nehemiah 10; 34-38 the first-fruits in one case are "brought to the house of Yahweh," and certain other offerings, such as dough, wine, and oil, were "brought to the chambers of our God". That is, one type of offering was taken to the temple for ritualistic presentation, and others were taken direct to the quarters of the priest. We begin to understand the origins of the vested interests of the later priesthood. The practice of commutation further accelerated this trend. Sacrifices could be commuted into money gifts, especially in the case of sacrifices that could only be made at the central shrine in Jerusalem.

Pilgrims coming from awkward distances, especially the Jews of the Disp⁵ ~~Disp~~ora, found it difficult to bring sacrificial gifts, so

1 Some affirm that Hebrew law forbade the offering of honey, but actually the law forbade it being offered in certain forms (Lev. 2:11).

1b Such as the temple tax of $7\frac{1}{2}$ shekels. ² Supra-p. 30 ³ Num. 18:13

4 This is definitely indicated in Neh. 10:34-38, 5 Dispersion -the Jews who lived outside of Palestine.

they paid the priests money in lieu of them. Thus there grew up the pernicious tendency to evaluate a sacrifice by its money value.

We have a reflection of this in Jesus' high appraisal of the widow's mite in contrast to the opulent gifts of the Pharisees.
¹

(2) The second class of offerings or gifts were those presented at the altar, and thereafter not burnt on the altar but given to the priests and becoming their property. The ritual for the presentation of this class of gifts is described in great detail in the Mishnah Tract Bikkurim.

(3) The third class of offerings were animals slain at the sanctuary and in part burnt on the altar, the remainder being consumed by the offerer and the priests. This was the classical form
² of "peace-offering".

(4) The fourth class, differentiated at a comparatively late period, consisted of gifts which were in part burnt on the altar and for the rest consumed by the priest. This included most of the sin-offerings and guilt-offerings.

(5) The fifth class consisted of gifts which were wholly burnt on the altar after, in the case of animal gifts, the withdrawal of the blood, which was thrown against the altar. This class consisted primarily of burnt-offerings.

These five classes could all be included in a simple three-fold classification based upon the extent to which the altar received and retained the gifts offered.

(a) Gifts of which the altar retains nothing. These would include the first two classes above.

(b) Those gifts of which the altar retains some part but not the whole. These would include classes (3) and (4) above.

(c) Those gifts of which the altar retains all - identical
with class five above.¹

Nearly all gifts were subject to fire-ritual, and this ritual was probably organically connected with the conception of a gift to God; the fire sublimated the food presented into a form suitable to the deity- at least so it was thought. Those parts eaten by the priests were regarded as gifts to the deity passed onto him by his proxies, the priests.

All sacrifices were not offered upon or at the altar. For example, a young calf was slain by running water ~~where~~² the body of a murdered man had been found. Similarly the red cow, whose ashes were used as an ingredient in "cleansing liquid", was slain outside the camp and was not presented at the altar. True, this was not regarded as a sacrifice, because not offered at the altar, yet it was subject to a blood-ritual and a fire-ritual.

We cite these two cases to demonstrate the fact that ritualistic observances were common in reference to objects that were not strictly sacrifices. Here we discern a trend toward that ritualistic complexity which characterized the priestly document (P) of the fifth century, B. C., and also the shackling legalism which our Lord combated during his ministry. This tendency points to the waning of the idea of communion and the strengthening of the idea of gift.

1 This classification is taken from Buchanan Gray, "Sacrifice in the Old Testament, Chapter 2. 2 Deut. 21:1-9. 3 Deut. 21: 1-9.

In this chapter we have indicated something of the complexity and arbitrariness of the sacrificial system in the earlier days of the period covered by the Old Testament record. We have noted the tendency of sacrificial gifts to pass out of the hands of the individual offerer into the hands of the priesthood, and the accompanying, and inevitable, development of a priestly class with vested interests in the priestly regulations attaching to the sacrificial system. We have further observed the trend away from the inherent sanctity of certain sacrificial objects, and the accompanying development of the system of redemption or commutation in money form.

From these considerations we can see the trend toward rigid legalism of worship, and the tendency to regard sacrifice as a means of purchasing favour with God; and, as a natural corollary, the tendency to assume that the payment of money gifts according to priestly prescription placed God under the obligation to favour those who made their sacrifices with meticulous regard for legal specifications. This trend manifestly led in the direction of a blind unconcern for the ethical demands of Yahweh, and a general disregard of the relationship between religion as an institution and life in its moral and ethical aspects.

It remained for the prophets, acting as spokesmen for God, to denounce a religion which was divorced from life, and which utterly lost sight of, or failed to comprehend, the fundamental character of God and his requirements of those who would acceptably worship him.

It would be well, at this point, for us to consider the attitude of the prophets toward the sacrificial system which had evolved to the state mentioned above.

The chief prophetic passages indicting legalistic sacrifices are well known - Hosea 6:4-6; Amos 4:4,5:21-25; Isaiah 1:10-17;
³ Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 7:21ff. One criticism is common to all, namely, that sacrifices are largely a means of gratifying those who offer them rather than Yahweh. They may be agreeable to the givers, but they are certainly not so to the divine recipient. This implication is explained quite clearly by the fact that sacrifices were in the main sacrificial feasts which in too many cases were orgies of gluttony and intemperance. The most summary expression of the prophetic attitude is that of Hosea, "I will
⁴ have mercy and not sacrifice."

The passages in Isaiah and Micah point clearly to the fact that the people were placing their trust in a system, a system which largely involved the attempt to purchase God's favour by gifts, rather than by the nobler attempt to establish communion, fellowship, and acceptance with God, upon the spiritual and moral plane. Some writers maintain that the prophets do not condemn, nor command the abolition of, the sacrificial system as such; that they seem even ready to tolerate it, or even to make use of it themselves, so long as the people will not abuse the system nor

¹ Supra p.35.

2 In this Chapter thus far we have secured our data largely from "Sacrifice in the Old Testament" by Buchanan Gray, an outstanding authority in this field. Our references shall cover a wider field from this point on.

3 To these should be added, "To obey is better than sacrifice," I Sam. 15:22. Also, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit..." Psalm 51:17. 4 Hosea 6:6.

continue to hold inadequate or distorted conceptions of its place
in their religious life . Prof. J. M. P. Smith in his book,
"The Moral Life of the Prophets", says, "It will hardly do to make
Amos ~~not~~¹ wholly discard ritual and put ethics in its place.....he
was not consistently hostile to ritual. It is safer to assume that
he is protesting not against ritual, per se, but against making
ritual do service for character and right conduct."
²

In similar vein Prof. T. H. Robinson, while admitting that Hosea and Jeremiah had little use for sacrifice, says, "Pre-exilic prophets would not have swept it away altogether: their concern was to see that men realized that religion was a moral and spiritual thing, and not merely a ritual one.
³"

The book of Deuteronomy does not prohibit sacrifice, it regulates it. It did its best to emphasize to Israel that as they went to their festivals and sacrifices they should go not with the thought that they were to give something to Yahweh, still less by so doing they could constrain his acceptance of them and extort his favour, but with thoughts of his goodness to them in delivering them from their bondage in Egypt, and in making their fields and flocks fertile from year to year. The eucharistic emphasis is constantly given.

We should realize in doing justice to the presentation of sacrifices to Yahweh, that a gift did represent a sacrifice on the part of the offerer. It involved the parting with something of value. The devotion of man to God expressed by his readiness to part with what he valued at God's command is the obvious moral

¹ J. M. P. Smith, "The Moral Life of the Prophets", p.81f.
² J. E. McFadyen, "The Message of Israel" p.64. See foot-note 1, p.38, for

of the story of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac.

This cost of sacrifice in terms of what the offerer loses leads naturally to the idea of self-sacrifice as the greatest of all gifts.² So it was that even inadequate sacrifices served as forerunners of adequate ones; and thus the Jewish sacrificial system with all the crudities and shallowness which marked it at times has been shown, in the light of history, to be responsible for man's eventual arrival at a truly spiritual and worthy understanding of God's requirements of his people.

As a general conclusion, reached by the best of modern scholarship, it may be said that the prophets were indifferent to sacrificial rites. To them God desires not sacrifice, but the knowledge of Himself; not sacrifice, but justice and mercy; not sacrifice but the dedications of the whole of life to His obedience. God's favour is found by men becoming like Himself, just and merciful.

Many recent authorities go even further than to assert the indifference of the prophets to the sacrificial system by declaring that they positively denounced it and pressed for its repudiation. I quote from a widely acclaimed recent book, "All the pre-exilic prophets are agreed that Yahweh... will have no respect to the offerings that people make (cf. Amos 5:21-25)....their object was

1 (Footnote continued from p. 37) "Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel," p. 190.

2 Psalm 40 and 51.
lb Genesis 22:1-14

that it served as a moral opiate, and dulled the consciences of men to the reality of true spiritual values.To the ordinary Israelite sin was a neglect of ritual regulations; to the prophets it was a violation of the moral law. ...It followed that no ritual within the area of sacrifice could possibly atone for sins committed in the region of morality... the atonement must be moral, and even the earliest of sacrifices were utterly futile in the effort to recover the favour of Yahweh." Dr. W. F. Bade¹ is even more positive. His own words convey this impression best, "In Ezekiel, Leviticus, and kindred Priestly literature God's favour is dependent upon a strict performance of the ritual. The prophets from Amos to Jeremiah denounce and repudiate this view.... they deny any intrinsic value in ritual purity."² Prof. G. B. Gray puts it as strongly as possible in these words, "It is not the institution, but the repudiation, of sacrifice, that distinguishes the religion of Israel."³ To these authoritative voices we should add a word from Buchanan Gray, "The prophets repudiate the gift-theory of sacrifice."⁴

The observation of J. J. Reeve concerning the whole sacrificial system of the Hebrews is most intriguing, "We prefer to regard the Hebrew sacrificial system as a great religious educational system, adapted to the capacity of the people of that age, intended to develop right conception of sin, proper appreciation of the holiness of God, correct ideas of how to approach God, and a

1 W. O. E. Oesterley, T. H. Robinson, "Hebrew religion", pp.201-2.
2 "The Old Testament in the Light of To-day", Chap.10.

3 Ibid. p. 281.

4 "Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p.43.

familiarity with the idea of sacrifice as the fundamental thing
in ¹redemption, life, and service to God and man."

The Hebrew sacrificial system ended in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple by the Romans. And as Buchanan Gray suggests, its end may have been an advantage, inasmuch as it gave freer play to the higher functions of religion.

CHAPTER 4.

ATONEMENT, PROPITIATION, EXPIATION.

There is no doubt that the Hebrews believed in the efficacy of sacrifice. And it is equally clear that no one theory can account for their zeal in sacrificing to Yahweh. Doubtless the idea of gift, communion, homage, and propitiation are all present.¹ Doubtless also different groups of these motives dominated certain periods, and others were in the ascendancy at other times. The emotions of fear, respect, penitence, reverence, gratitude, and desire all played their respective parts. We have already considered² the prophetic denunciation of the lower motives which lay behind many of the sacrifices and their insistence upon the inwardness of true religion.

It now becomes our purpose to examine Hebrew sacrifice with a view to discovering the part which the idea of atonement,³ propitiation, expiation played in it; for this, be it recalled, was one of the earliest elements to be detected in sacrifice, and also the one having the highest possibilities of development into an adequate relationship with the divine. Furthermore, it is this element in Old Testament sacrifice which leads us most directly to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ which is to be our final consideration in this paper.

1 Ibia. p. 26, from, "Christian Doctrine of Salvation", by G.B. Knudson.

2 Supra p. 36.

3 Supra p. 23.

Two Hebrew sacrificial terms are of particular interest to us because of their suggestion of the fact that the Hebrew people offered sacrifices with a view to removing conditions in man, whether physical or ethical, that aroused divine displeasure, and thus of arresting or preventing the punishment which Yahweh would decree. These terms are ¹ *nataān* (or *hattāth*), "sin-offering", and ² *ashām*, "guilt" or "trespass-offering". These terms in their derived sense indicate that sin-offerings and guilt-offerings would be payments for sin. For example, guilt-offerings (*ashām*), special offerings in cases where wrong had been done to God, could be assessed in money, such as tithes and dues. And if an animal were sacrificed it must be of a certain value.

There was an important distinction between the sin-offering ³ and the guilt-offering. The sin-offering was meant specifically to atone for unwitting sins, sins of error (*sheghāgħah*), mistakes or rash acts. There were gradations of them for different classes ⁴ of offenders: the anointed priest, the whole congregation, a ruler, one of the common people.

The first mention of the sin-offering is at the consecration ⁵ of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. At this ceremony a bull-⁶ ox was killed before the altar, some of its blood was put upon the horns of the altar by Moses, the rest was poured out at the base. The fat of the inwards was burned upon the altar, the flesh and skin were burned outside the camp. Every day during the con-

1 & 2 Many examples of the rules laid down for these offerings are found Lev. 4-7, 11-15.

3 International Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. 4, p. 2644.

4 Lev. 4:1-35; 5 Exod. 29:10ff.; 6 Supra p. 28.

secration this was done.

The sin-offering did not apply to conscious and wilful violation of the law. This was the sin unto death. No atonement for it was possible. There were, however, a certain few exceptions. These were covered by the guilt-offering. It definitely expressed expiation and restitution, the latter being suggested by the line which always accompanied the guilt-offering. In general "the prevailing view in the priestly writings was that only sins of inadvertence may be forgiven."¹

The use of the term ~~hata'ah~~² in the ritual of the red cow indicates the real value of the term when used for what was burnt at the altar as an offering to Yahweh (that is, when used as a sin-offering.) It then did not so much refer to the fact that they were offerings to Yahweh as that they were victims by means of which the sins of men who offered them were removed; whether in virtue of the gift of the animal to God, or of some ritual treatment of it.

True, these terms were largely employed in the post-exilic period, yet Ezekiel refers to them as though their use was customary and familiar. Doubtless they were familiar, even though subordinate in the pre-exilic period. In Ezekiel they stand beside burnt offerings and peace offerings as things equally familiar.³

I quote now from Dr. Buchanan Gray, "But apart from the names there are of course other means of determining whether other, and what other, sacrifices besides the sin-offerings and the guilt-
1 A.C.Knu'dson, "Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p.311.
2 Num. 19:9; 3 Knudson (Ibid.) suggests that prior to Ezekiel's day any sacrifice might serve the purpose of atonement."

offerings were offered with a propitiatory or expiatory purpose, and the most important is the attachment to a law or description of sacrifice that it was "to make atonement" (**לִכְפָּר**). The root of this designation is **kipper** (**לִכְפָּר**), which, regardless of all the discussions which have gathered about its meaning, undoubtedly meant to cover, to cover over. When the object of the verb is a person the Hebrew idiom would mean "to cover the face" of the angry person, that is, to get him to overlook the wrong committed so as to look again with favor upon the person who had committed the wrong.¹

When, on the other hand, the object is a sin or an offence, the usage indicates that the sin or offence is covered so as to make it henceforth of no affect on either the wronged person or the one who had done the wrong.²

Arabic and Babylonian terms indicate that the idea of propitiation and expiation were current, and the Hebrew usage was probably much the same. The term "kuppuru" used in the Babylonian ritual of atonement is certainly identical with the Hebrew kipper,³ the technical designation for "atonement" in the language of P. On the question of the original meaning of the Semitic root which gave kuppuru in Babylonian, and kipper in Hebrew, Dr. Langdon writes,⁴ "In the ordinary ritual of atonement water, bread, grains, plants, and animal sacrifices are introducedthe priest seeks to drive the demons into the water, the bread, the grain, or whatever element is used. When he utters the curse the evil passes into

1 Genesis 3:20-21. 2 Gray, "Sacrifice in the Old Testament," p.67.

3 The noun form of kipper is **kopher**, "the price of a life".

4 Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Article on Sacrifice

into the element, which is then taken away. The bread, water, plant, etc., into which the curse had driven the powers of evil are called "takpirtu". It was therefore a logical development for kupuru to attach to itself the sense of purge, purify, wipe away, atone.

This use of the Babylonian term, kupuru, gives us our clue for determining the Semitic conception of atonement. That is to say, it involved the idea of sin being covered, removed, wiped away, turned aside (referring to the penalty of sin). Hence the idea of the propitiation of God and the expiation of sin are both inferred. Oehler ¹ explains that in sacrifice man places the life of a pure, innocent, ² sacrificial animal between himself and God, because he is unable to approach God on account of his sinfulness and impurity. Thus the sacrifice becomes a "kopher" for him- it covers his sin. The law does not lay the emphasis upon the slaughter, ³ but upon the shedding of the blood. The "bursting of the blood" was the essential thing. The altar is not regarded as a place of execution but as the place where the sins of the covenant people were covered- hence the security afforded the sinner who clung to the blood-stained horns of the altar.

In the Mithraic cult, which grew up in Persia in the first century B.C., one of the leading ceremonies was the "taurobolium" in which a candidate seeking purification stood under a latticed ⁴ platform and was drenched by the blood of a bullock slain above.

1 "Old Testament Theology"- Oehler.

2 See footnote 3, p. 44 above.

3 *Supra*.p.6, footnote 2.

4 Cited in thesis on "The Mystery Religions." by Rev. T.M. Webb.

The Cybeline Cult used the same ceremony. The sins of the worshipper
1
were "covered by the blood".

The fundamental idea of bloody sacrifices in early Semitism was that the victim took the place of the man and redeemed him or atoned for him as a substitute. Dr. Owen C. Whitehouse says, "In the days of the exile and after sacrifice became to an increasing degree propitiatory, although undoubtedly from very early times sacrifice expressed the idea of propitiation as well as communion."

All propitiatory sacrifices were blood offerings- "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh 3 atonement by reason of the life." A.C. Knudson in commenting on this passage says, "This is the nearest approach to a 'rationale' 4 of atonement in the Old Testament."

A most striking illustration of the propitiatory virtue of 5 early sacrifice is seen in the story of Saul's pursuit of David. David, though unconscious of any definite sin, feels that Saul's pursuit of him is an evidence of Yahweh's anger, and therefore the only thing for him to do is to bring a sacrificial offering and to burn it on the altar in order that the fumes may please and placate Yahweh. It is significant to note that since David was conscious of no particular sin, his offering was purely propitiatory with no element of expiation. "If it be Yahweh that hath incited thee against

1 Cf. footnote 4, p. 45 above.

2 In A.S. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, p.93.

3 Lev. 17:11; 4 Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p.515.

5 I Sam. 26:19.

me, let him smell an offering." A further classic example is Noah's sacrifice after the flood. We read these words, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake."
2

We turn now to 2 Samuel 24, a chapter which has been described as "the charter for the sacrificial service which was rendered to
3 Yahweh on Mount Zion." The story culminates, as Gray points out,
4 in the first sacrifice on Mount Zion, and in the building of the altar
which is to become the central and ultimately the only place where
Israel might sacrifice to Yahweh. The story opens with the record
5 of Yahweh's anger against Israel, because of David's offense in
numbering the people. Then the altar was built and sacrifices are
offered, and "Yahweh suffered himself to be entreated for the land
6 and the plague was stayed in Israel."

In other passages, such as I Samuel 3:1f, the expiatory purpose is predominant.

A striking instance of human sacrifice being offered as propitiation is in the record of 2 Kings 3:27. True, the sacrifice here is a Moabite one, but its interpretation is a Hebrew one. Chemosh, the god of Moab, was angry with his people. As a result he has allowed Israel to drive them into a corner. At this point the king of Moab offered his eldest son in sacrifice to Chemosh. As a result the anger of Chemosh is deflected from Moab and poured out upon Israel who retreat in all haste to escape the wrath of Chemosh.

The principle records of propitiatory human sacrifice in Israel

1 Gen. 8:20; 2 Gen. 8:21; 3 Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p.84
4 Sacrifice in Old Testament, p.84, 5 Cf. I Sam. 26:19, 6 2Sam. 24:25.

are in the writings of the seventh century. It was then a common thing for children to be offered as burnt offering¹ in the Valley of Gehinnom. "They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire."² A distinct suggestion of the expiatory and propitiatory merit of human sacrifice is found in the word of Micah, "Shall I give~~my~~ my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul?"³

3

Of course, as we have already observed, the tendency of the people to give ever greater prominence to expiatory and propitiatory sacrifice was accompanied by a prophetic tendency to substitute the sacrifices of right conduct before Yahweh. What was past was past and man could not undo it by sacrifice, but God's anger could be changed to favour by their return in humility to well-doing. "Hate the evil, and love the good, it may be that Yahweh ... will be gracious .."⁴

Enough has been said above to indicate quite definitely the place which the idea of propitiation and expiation had in Hebrew sacrifices-increasingly so after the Exile, but in a measure so from earliest times.

In concluding our treatment of this section we now turn our attention to the Day of Atonement and the Passover, the two great Hebrew institutions which bear eloquent witness to the influential place of propitiation, atonement, and expiation in the sacrificial system.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

The most important of all Hebrew wholly days, the Day of Atonement,

¹ Jeremiah 32:35; ² Chron. 33:6; ³ Micah 6:7

³ Supra 36ff; ⁴ Amos 5:15.

fell on the tenth day of the seventh month, Tishri. It shared with the Passover the first place in the reverent attention of the Jews. Its importance developed comparatively late- probably after the Exile,
and certainly not before the fifth century B.C.

The unique feature of ³the day lay not in the quantity or type of sacrifices, but in the fact that the whole day from evening to evening was spent in fasting- a token of genuine repentance and sorrow for sin. To break one's fast was a mortal sin, and the fast included abstention from all work. All other days on the festival calendars of the Pentateuch were days of joy. Furthermore, the Day of Atonement did not in any sense, like most of the feasts, commemorate a historical event in the life of Israel. ⁴"The day occupied a striking place in the calendar; coming between the New Year's Day on which, as early as the Mishnah at least, it was believed that men were judged and their destinies fixed by God for the year, and the great feast of the Ingathered Harvest with its joy and cheerful rites which began a fortnight later. The yearly expiation was thus able to add during the days of the festival to the joy of harvest the joy of recently forgiven sin. In the later Midrash it was the one day in the 365 of

1 In "Jewish Religion", by Friedlander, we are told that the Day of Atonement has been the most important Hebrew Holy Day for at least the last 1700 years.

2 Lev. 16 and Numbers are the most important Old Testament sources of our knowledge regarding it. The Mishnah tract Yoma is also important.

3 It was but a single day in the year, whereas the other major festal days, required by the Law, numbered 20; yet this one day played a larger part in the religious life of the Hebrews than all the others.- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. 1, p. 327.

4 The author of Jubilees makes a determined attempt to attach it to the mourning of Jacob after the supposed slaying of Joseph by his brethren.

when Satan for three hours ceased from accosting Israel."

This quotation bears witness to the genuine sense of Atonement which the day produced. A further indication of the day's importance is seen in the fact that on that day the high priest did certain services which on other days could be done by any priest; and also by the fact that on that day certain things were done which only the high priest could perform. Then again, on this day alone was the method of the scape-goat adopted in the interests of the whole community. All people shared in it because the Sabbath rest fell also on that day and all must keep it.

Two of the most prominent rites of the day demand our attention:

(1) The Blood Ritual, (2) The Scape-Goat.

THE BLOOD RITUAL. In the blood ritual the high priest, beginning with Aaron,³ must take a bullock for himself and his house, and kill it before the altar. Sweet incense was burned within the rail and blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat and before it seven times. By this ritual was the priesthood rendered worthy to secure from Yahweh rich blessings for his people. Of striking interest and significance was the SCAPE-GOAT RITUAL. On the Day of Atonement the high priest must take two he-goats for the people, present the goats at the sanctuary, cast lots, one for Yahweh as a sin-offering, the other for Azazel, to be sent into the wilderness. The goat selected by lot as a sin-offering was killed before the altar, as was the bullock of the priest and his house, its blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and before it, and its carcass burned, with the carcass of the sacrificed bullock, outside the camp.

¹ Buchanan Gray, "Sacrifice in the Old Testament", p.319.

² Lev. 16:5-8; ³ Lev. 16:1-28.

The other ¹ goat, that is, the scape-goat, was also presented before the altar, the hands of the people were laid upon it, the sins of all were confessed over it by the high priest and transferred ² to the goat, and it was sent into the wilderness. Sir J. E. Frazer declares "that the general principle of transferring sins physically to some animal or other medium, and, by then dismissing the medium, getting rid ³ for good of the sins, is now recognized as a wide-spread practice associated with the stage of belief far nearer the primitive than the religion either of Ezra or of Moses."

An important fact to bear in mind is, that though Azazel ⁴ receives the sins, he is not responsible for ridding Israel of them. The removal of sin is entirely due to the power of Yahweh. The goat can be loaded with Israel's sin and as Azazel must receive them because Yahweh wills that "Expiation shall be made for the Israelites from ⁵ all their sins once a year."

The idea of a 'transfer of guilt' is the striking feature of the scape-goat ritual. It should be observed that the ritual does not in any way suggest vicarious death. The element of atonement derives ⁶ from the sprinkling of the blood of the slain goat upon the mercy seat.

1 Lev. 16:5-8, 2 Lev. 16:10-22.

3 In "The Golden Bough", quoted in Gray, "Sacrifice in the Old Testament", p. 315.

4 As to the identity of Azazel much doubt prevails. Probably it is a comparatively late literary addition, because it does not belong to the essence of the rite of the scape-goat. For the goat to go into the solitary wilderness would be enough. T. K. Cheyne says that Azazel is a fallen angel substituted by the author of the ritual for the earth demons of popular thought. Cesterley and Robinson in "Hebrew Religion" tell us that Azazel in Hebrew means "complete removal". So the use of the term Azazel in the ritual signifies the idea of sin removed.

5 Lev. 16:34; 6 Note Lev. 16:26, 28;

7 A certain mystical sanctity was in ancient times attributed to the blood because it was regarded as the seat of life, and this made it

(Continued as footnote 1, p. 52)

"For it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life."¹

And yet the ritual of the scape-goat with its conception of the transfer of guilt played a leading part in Jewish thought, and represents a mode of thinking which has dominated the Christian doctrine of atonement at various times.

With this thought of the transfer of guilt in mind we might do well to turn to the place in the Old Testament of the idea of the substitution of one victim for another's sin. There is no doubt that it played a part in Hebrew thinking, although there is no warrant for reading it into the scape-goat ritual as Christian theologians have been wont to do in their effort to make Christ the scape-goat for man's sin.

3

The grandsons of Saul were required to pay with their lives the penalty which Saul's sin deserved. The idea of substitution seems to be suggested in this. Then again, Isaac was saved from being offered up as a burnt offering by Abraham by the substitution of the

4

ram caught in the thicket. The first-born in early Israel were

5

redeemed by gifts or offerings. In later times the Levites were

6

regarded as an offering to Yahweh for the first-born of Israel.

In these instances there is, however, no idea of penal substitution.

There is no doubt whatever that the Priestly writer made provision

7

for substitutionary sacrifices and offerings.

1 a fitting symbol of the sinner's sorrow for sin and desire for pardon." - A. C. Knudson, "Religious Teaching of Old Testament," p. 314

2 Lev. 17:11; 3 2 Sam. 21:1-11; 4 Gen. 22:1-14 (E); 5 Exod. 34:20 (J);

6 Exod. 13:2, Numbers 3:12f, etc. (all in P).

7 Cf. Lev. 4:18-21(P).

We turn now to a consideration of the sacrifice of the Passover, regarded as another great Hebrew institution embodying the concepts of propitiation and expiation.

The word 'passover' is from the Hebrew *pasah*, from *pasa*, "to pass", "spring over", "to spare". It is also reliably related to the Assyrian '*pasahu*', meaning "to placate". The annual Passover Festival was held on the evening of the 14th. day of Nisan or ¹Ab²habh and represented really the opening of the seven-day feast of unleavened bread. The children of Israel began the keeping of the Passover in the wilderness of Sinai after their departure from the Land of Goshen. In the very beginning of their national life in Palestine we find them celebrating the Passover under the leadership of Joshua, in the plains of Jericho. By the days of Hezekiah it had fallen into such a state of neglect that neither the priest nor people were prepared for the king's urgent appeal to observe it. In the reign of Josiah the festival was revived and its continuance up to the Exile is attested by Ezekiel's interest in it. In post-exilic days it was kept more strictly than ever. And by the beginning of the Christian era it was the most devoutly kept of all the Jewish festivals. The Roman soldiers in Jesus' day released Jewish prisoners in recognition of the great celebration. The festival is mentioned no fewer than 31 times in the New Testament. The Christian eucharist is based upon the feast, and until the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. the Christian church observed Easter on the date of the Passover. After the des-

1 The Passover could only be eaten during the night (Exod.12:1-23)
2 Corresponding to our month of March-April. 3 Num.9:5

4 Joshua 5:10; 5 Ezek. 45:18; 6 Ezra. 6:19ff..

7 Nathan Isaacs in International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, p.2558, says, (Quotation given as footnote 1, p. 54)

truction of the Temple in 70 A.D. the Passover became of necessity largely a home service and the blood ritual of the Paschal Lamb were omitted. So much for the historical survey of the institution.

2

According to Buchanan Cray two facts serve to indicate that the Passover, in common with other Hebrew sacrifices, was not merely a gift. These facts are: (1) The Sacrificial Meal.
(2) The Blood Ritual.

The Passover Meal is one of the earliest parts of the Priestly ritual. There are two accounts of the first Passover: the record of J in Exodus 12:21-28, which says nothing of the Paschal Meal; and the record of P in Exodus 12:1-13, which describes the meal with great care. The law of Deuteronomy 16:1-8 commands the eating of the meal and implies that it is a very ancient rite. The primitive character of the meal is clearly suggested by the fact that in P participants in the meal are forbidden to eat the flesh of the victim

3

raw or to break any of its bones. The inference is that there was

4

a time when the victim was eaten raw and that the bones, having been

1 "After the destruction of the temple the Passover became a home service and has remained so to this day. The Paschal lamb is no longer included. Only the Samaritans have continued this rite up to the present. In the Jewish home a roasted bone is placed upon the table in memory of the rite, and other articles symbolic of the Passover are placed beside it: such as a roasted egg, symbolic of the free-will offering; a sauce called haroseth, said to resemble the mortar used in Egypt; salt water for the symbolic dipping (cf. Matthew 26:23); the bitter herb and the maccoth."

2 Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 369

3 Exod. 12:46.

4 Supra p. 6

broken and powdered, were eaten as well. This suggestion on the
ancient nilus ceremony of the Arabs indicates the antiquity of
certain features of the paschal meal.

The Paschal meal was originally eaten to "secure the clansmen
the protection of their god by uniting them closely with him."²

In the body of the victim is hidden the very life of the god—the
elixir of life. Quoting from Gray³, "On this theory of the Paschal
meal the double Paschal ritual of sprinkling the blood and eating
the victim secured its main end, the security of the household, by
a double method: the blood sprinkled without kept the evil powers
at bay, and the meal eaten within renewed the divine life of the
inhabitants." As time went on the external application of the blood
became secondary in importance to the meal itself. After 70 A.D.
the sacrificial element in the meal was completely subordinated to
the eating of the sacred meal. In pre-exilic days, however a vital
factor in the feast was the sacrificial victim, slain within the
Temple precincts, its fat offered on the altar, its blood poured away
at the base of the altar.⁴ It is striking to note that in the days
of Philo the Paschal victim was not slain by the sacred class of
Levites, as had become the custom for all other sacrifices, but by
the owners of the Paschal victims; and by this act the layman became
for the time being a priest. "On this day," says Philo, "the whole
nation sacrifices without waiting for their priest."⁵

1 Supra p. 6. 2 Beer, P sachim, p. 15

3 Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 369-370.

4 In the Old Testament there is a two-fold prohibition against eating "any manner of blood": first, because the life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev.14:11,14); secondly, because for this reason God has chosen the blood to be the symbol of the life substituted for the life of the guilty in atoning sacrifice. (Lev.14:11) 5 De Decal p.30 (Gray p.376)

The Paschal meal was primarily commemorative of past redemption, of the intervention of God in the days of the nation's infancy. "If we knew no more than this," says Buchanan Gray, "it would be scarcely possible to overlook or overestimate the probability that this commemoration of the past fixed the minds of the participants with hope for the future: for a new interposition of Providence which ¹ should set them free from present servitude."

We shall have further occasion to refer to the Passover as we point out how its essential meaning was fulfilled for Christian believers in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, "the lamb slain from the ² foundation of the world."

We pass on to speak of the blood ritual of the Passover. This ritual was one of the earliest features of the Passover, and at times the most essential. The blood ritual described in scripture was actually only carried out on one single occasion, namely, on the night ³ of the exodus, although "this thing" is to be observed as "an ⁴ ordinance forever." But there was much later a blood ritual re-introduced into the Passover (probably about 300 B.C.). "The sprinkling of the blood on the door posts in Egypt marks the great difference between the Passover of Egypt and the Passover as a permanent institution. The Passover in Egypt is of interest chiefly ⁵ because of its witness to a ritual of undetermined antiquity."

The victims supplying the blood for the ritual were small cattle,

1 Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 379.

2 Revelation 13:8

3 Exodus 12:24 (J)- also described by P in Exodus 12:7,13.

4 Exodus 12:14.

5 Buchanan Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament, p. 356.

sheep or goats, and were chosen with great care ("without spot or blemish"). A victim, usually a lamb, was taken from each home on the 10th. Nisan and was slain at or before sunset on the 14th. Nisan .
Special care was taken that no bone should be broken, and that it should not be sodden with water. Then on Passover night the blood was applied to the doorposts of every Hebrew house. Then the victims themselves were eaten within the homes. As to the purpose of the blood it was not expiatory originally, but later became definitely so. In the beginning it was rather apotropaic, that is, aimed at keeping some power at a distance- probably by the act of entering into communion with another and greater power such as Yahweh. The Hebrew no doubt applied the blood to keep something outside his house on Passover night. "The blood ritual of the early Passover is thus an instance of what we may term the ⁴reinforced closed door." Later, of course, it became a memorial of the way in which something had been kept out on a certain occasion. At all events the blood ritual represented an earnest effort to keep the Israelites home free from the blight of evil spirits, and later was regarded as a means of satisfying an offended deity by the sight of blood representing his people's recognition of their sin and their effort to atone for it.

This completes our study of sacrifice among the Hebrews of the Old Testament period. We have observed some of the most conspicuous

1 Exodus 12:5

2 The penalty for breaking a bone was forty stripes save one- A.S. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, p. 103.

3 Striking parallels to this rite are found today among the Syrians and the Arabians (Cf. Gray, "Sacrifice in the Old Testament," p. 360)

4 Buchanan Gray, Sacrifice in the Old Testament p. 36

forms or sacrifice, and some of the most elaborately developed rituals; and have, at the same time, noted some of the leading motives, often intermingled, which prompted them. Feelings of fear, dependence, kinship, penitence, and obligation, all played their respective parts in defining the significance of various sacrifices. We noted how there gradually emerged, due largely to the leadership of the 8th. century prophets, a moral and ethical content in the sacrificial system. And again we saw how, with the development of the sense of sin growing out of the developing realization of God's moral demands upon his people, sacrifice became increasingly propitiatory, expiatory, and to some extent substitutionary. This more profound aspect of sacrifice reached its most notable expression in the rites of the Day of Atonement and of the Passover.

It now becomes our purpose to conclude this paper by a consideration of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as representing the very highest interpretation of the significance of sacrifice as a means of establishing proper relations between man and God. We are not concerned here with Jesus' own attitude toward sacrifice, nor are we interested in the problem of the sources or authorship of the passages we shall refer to. Our sole interest in this closing chapter will be to discover by reference to the gospels and epistles as they stand, just how the death of Jesus Christ was conceived by the New Testament writers as being the fulfilment of the sacrificial system whose development had been so vitally related to the history of Jesus' generic ancestors.

CHAPTER 5

THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Our study thus far of the development of the idea of sacrifice has revealed the fact that running through all the varied ^{and} changing forms of sacrifice have been a comparatively few basic beliefs and motives. It is therefore quite reasonable for us to examine the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ with the expectation of discovering in the New Testament records concerning it definite reflections of the views attaching to the sacrificial systems of the Old Testament period, and even of periods still more remotely past. And we quickly discover that our expectations are well founded. In all of the major writings of the New Testament we find that the death of Jesus is represented in terms that distinctly echo the Old Testament concepts of sacrifice in this relations to man's desire for the favour, forgiveness, and acceptance of God.

The synoptic gospels all report the last supper which Jesus and his disciples had together before the Master's arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Whether the Last Supper synchronized with the Passover does not have any bearing upon our purpose here. We know that very early in the history of the Christian church the Eucharist or Sacrament became modelled after the Jewish Passover. The language used by the gospel writers in reporting the events connected with the Last Supper indicates in a striking way how the death of Jesus was interpreted in the light of the current ideas relating to the Passover ritual. "And as they were eating, Jesus

took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, "take, eat; this is my body." And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."¹ These words mark back to the Jewish Passover where, in the post-exilic days in particular, the blood was regarded as propitiatory in character, and the broken body of the Paschal lamb was eaten as a token of communion with Yahweh.² This parallelism is heightened by such words as these, "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of thee Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."³; "For if the blood of bulls and of goats,how much more shall the blood of Christ,purge your conscience ...for without shedding of blood is no remission;"⁴ "Behold the Lamb of God,⁵ which taketh away the sin of the world."

In these references, and in others too numerous to mention, we observe how the death of Jesus in relation to human sin and the general spiritual well-being of mankind was regarded by first century writers in the general terms of the Hebrew Passover feast—especially in terms of the propitiatory and expiatory significance attached to the Passover in the post-exilic period. Throughout the passages quoted we note the prevalence of the idea of 'blood' as vitally bearing upon the remission of sin. We recall that the shedding of blood played a consistently important part in *the* Old Testament

1 Matthew 26:26-28; 2 Supra 53if.; 3 John 6:53

4 Hebrews 9:13-14,22; (Cf. also 1 Peter 1:19, 1 Cor. 5:7).

5 John 1:29.

in all sacrifices that had as their primary object the removal of the barrier of sin between disobedient men and a just and righteous God.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find a vivid carry-over of the spirit of the Day of Atonement in the fact that the writer of the epistle represents Jesus as the great high priest- "Called of God ¹ an high priest after the order of Melchisedec," "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood....to ² make intercession for them." It will be recalled from our previous ³ consideration of the Day of Atonement rites that the high priest played a conspicuous part. Certain of the more fundamental services of the day could be done only by the high priest. So the high priestly office became an indispensable factor in the securing of the atonement for sin that was so earnestly sought. Similarly, the writer of Hebrews represents Jesus Christ, the "high priest ⁴ after the order of Melchisedec," as man's one and only intercessor with God; and as the One who has made once and for all that sacrifice for human sin which is acceptable before God- even the sacrifice of His own most precious life. "He needeth not daily ...to offer up sacrifice ...for this he did once, when he offered up himself."⁵

There is no more impressive parallel between the more exalted ideas of sacrifice in the Old Testament and the suffering and death of Christ than in the representation of Christ, by several of the New Testament writers in terms of the "Suffering Servant" depicted in

1 Hebrews 7:17; 2 Hebrews 7:24; 3 Supra p. 57
4 Hebrews 7:17; 5 Hebrews 7:27;

1 Isaiah 53. We cite a few typical passages: "Who bore our sins in
2 his own body on the treeby whose stripes we are healed";
"He was lead as a sheep to the slaughter ...so opened he not his
3 mouth"; "He was in all points tempted like as we are .."; "So
4 Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."
5

In Deutero-Isaiah's exalted concept of the Suffering Servant, Israel by her bondage and suffering would win first the sympathy, then the respect and honor of the pagan nations surrounding her. Gradually these nations would turn to Israel's God and by devotion to him would escape the suffering and punishment which disregard of
6 Him, the one true God, must always involve. As Israel thus vicariously bore the sins of the nations so Jesus was regarded by many of the New Testament writers as bearing the sins of the whole world. By His suffering men would be brought to see the heinousness of sin, the suffering and death which are its inevitable wages, and the divine love that made such a tremendous and costly effort to save mankind from its destruction. This realization would lead men to repentance and to the adoption for their lives of the purposes of Him who
7 "died for them". This conception forms the heart of the Moral Influence and Substitutionary theories of the atonement.

To Paul the Apostle the suffering and death of Christ "for the sins of the world" satisfied the demands of a righteous God by paying in full, in terms of his own suffering and death, the
8 'price' of man's redemption, the penalty which man's sin rightly

deserved. As a consequence man, by accepting the free salvation
1 In the A.V. this chapter is headed, "Christ's Free Redemption."
2 I Peter 2:24 (cf. Is.53:5); 3 Acts 8:32 (cf. Is.53:7);
4 Heb.4:15 (cf. Is. 53:3); 5 Heb. 9:28 (cf. Is. 53:4);
6 (See footnote 1, p.63;) 7 2 Cor. 5:15; 8 I Cor. 6:20.

entered through Christ need not bear the penalty of his own sin, inasmuch as it has been born already, and God is morally bound to recognize the sufficiency of Christ's redemptive work for all who seek reconciliation in His name.

A few representative passages from Paul's writings will illustrate the clear-cut way in which this "Satisfaction" or "Ransom Theory" of the atonement appears in his theology. "But God commendeth his love ¹ justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

"In whom we have redemption through his blood...." "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the ² enmity thereby." "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that ³ was against us, .. and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross!" ⁴

Centuries after Paul's letters were written his view of the relation of the death of Christ to human sin became the authoritative doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, largely through the work of Anselm, ⁵ truly great church scholar of the 11th century, in his great book, "Cur Deus Homo." Out of the feudal world in which Anselm lived he developed a theology based upon the sovereignty of God. His theory of the atonement proceeds along the lines of faultless logic. Man has sinned; by his sin he has not only offended the justice of God, but has also violated his sovereign dignity: as a consequence God is angry with the sinner and must be satisfied and compensated; such

1 Some would consider the suffering in Babylon as not being the consequences of sin, and hence would consider the idea of vicarious suffering attached to Isaiah 53 as a later interpretation. Common usage, however would seem to warrant the use of the passage which we have made.

1b Romans 5:8-10; 2 Ephesians 1:7; 3 Ephesians 2:16

4 Colossians 2:13-14

satisfaction can only be made by one who will make full payment for the sin, and at the same time, by the "merit" of his person, satisfy the offended dignity of God. The only one fitted to do all this was Christ, the divine and sinless Son of God. By his death he satisfied the claims of justice for sin, and by the quality of his person he satisfied the offended dignity of God. Only he could atone adequately for human sin, and only by an acceptance of his 'finished work'^y could sinful men be restored to the favour of God.

In the Protestant Church Luther and Calvin wrought zealously to make the "Satisfaction Theory" of Anselm the official view of Protestantism. The measure of their success is seen in the fact that their position is still influential in many ultra-conservative circles.

It should be said that there is a measure of truth in the Ransom or Satisfaction Theory- truth far more profound and far more worthy of the character of the god revealed by Jesus Christ than that represented by the thorough-going theology of Anselm. There is something in the nature of God himself which must be satisfied before He and one who has wilfully sinned against him can approach a relationship of harmony and accord. A clue to this truth is seen in the fact that even an earthly father cannot have the same feeling toward a wilful and rebellious child as he has toward one who is devoted and obedient; neither can he share his life and his ideals so fully with the one as with the other. A change must take place in the attitude of the self-estranged child before the true father-son relationship can be restored. This change is effected by repentance and surrender. These new attitudes elicit the Father's

forgiveness, and reconciliation is made possible, yes, inevitable. And this reconciliation is accomplished without any compromise of the Father's moral rectitude, and without the son being deprived of that transformation of mind and heart which he so vitally needed in order to realize life in its highest terms. The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ plays a vital part in this more adequate view of the process by which God and sinners are reconciled. Christ's death reveals to men the fact that though they may be sinners, and in that sense under the wrath of God, that still God's heart of love goes out for them even unto death. This evidence of the divine love, and of the Father's suffering for the sin of his children, tends to break down any opposition to One whose desire for the recovery of his estranged children is so poignantly obvious. Christ, therefore, performed the mission which made an adequate salvation possible "without God on his part surrendering his adherence to the principle of moral rectitude, his loyalty to holiness, his hatred of sin. God was revealed in Christ as just and ¹justifier at the same time."

We have endeavoured in this chapter thus far to show how the suffering and death of Jesus Christ was regarded by the New Testament writers, and by generations of their interpreters, in terms of the Old Testament concepts of sacrifice. In the light of this fact the death of Christ becomes the culmination of the development of the idea of sacrifice insofar as the scriptural records go.

We shall, at this point, outline our own view of the present-day significance of the death of Jesus Christ in relation to the moral and spiritual needs of mankind.

¹ Dr. A.S. Tuttle, notes on Christian Theology.

The historic views of the relation of the death of Christ to the life of men seem at their face value inadequate. They are too artificial and arbitrary. There is too much of the ancient bargaining spirit surviving in them. There is too much that resembles the propitiatory motives of primitive sacrifice when men undertook, by the fulfilment of certain stipulated conditions, to compel the deity to assume an attitude of favor toward them. Many of the traditional views of the Atonement tend to make moral and ethical living a secondary concern in the matter of man's relation to God, inasmuch as 'salvation' is thought to rest upon the acceptance of a cut-and-dried formula, the resigned acceptance (in blind faith, if necessary) of a certain set of conditions, rather than upon the progressive attainment of a quality of life built around the high ideals, attitudes, and principles of conduct for which Christ died, and which His life so splendidly incarnated. These criticisms of the traditional views of the atoning work of Christ must, however, be made only while keeping in mind the elemental truths which the various theories of the Atonement sought to incorporate and perpetuate. Our observations above as to the spiritual truth underlying the Satisfaction Theory of Anselm is but typical of the more adequate conceptions which are at least suggested in most of the time-honored views of the Atonement.

To my thought one is impelled to see in the death of Jesus God's hatred of sin, His yearning for the sinner's emancipation from all that constricts and befouls life, and His suffering with the sinner² by "sympathetic identification". It reveals the cosmic fact that the effect of an individual's sin is not confined to himself, but falls with crushing weight upon the heart of the Father. By his
1 Supra 64 - 65. 2 A phrase coined by Dr. Marcus Dods.

love and sympathy for his children God's sorrows for their sin and shares the punishment which it involves. Thus in very truth Christ did "bear in his own body our sins upon the tree." In his wounded love that suffered on Calvary, not a sacrificial Lamb whose blood appeased divine wrath and atoned for the sins which had angered God. "God is the great sin-bearer. He bears sin as a hater of sin and a lover of men."¹

The attitude of the Father heart towards sin (not vindictively toward the sinner) thus tends to turn men against sin and to awaken within them a desire for reconciliation. This attitude is clearly described in the parable of the Prodigal Son, "And when he came to himselfhe said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."² The penitent son was joyfully reinstated by the father whose happiness knew no bounds as he observed the evidence of the complete change of heart which had taken place in his son. The father's first desire was not for restitution to himself for an injury suffered, but for the recovery of the son that was lost.³

Belief in Christ as the "author and finisher of our faith"⁴ does not mean to me that we are to regard Him as prisoners whose only hope of release lies in His ability to furnish the necessary ransom price. Rather such belief implies an acceptance of His way of life as our way of life; the making of His will supremely ours;

1 For us, without the need of any discussion here, Christ is synonymous with God.

2 I Peter 2:24; 3 Dr. A. S. Tuttle, notes on Christian Theology.

4 Luke 15:17-19

6 Heb. 12:2

5 The joyous feast held for the returning prodigal suggests the joy which marked many primitive sacrificial feasts - joy occasioned by the feeling that the sacrifice had restored them to the gods' favor.

the complete surrender in consecration of life to His lofty purposes. A 'saving' belief in Christ* means for me an acknowledgement of the nobility of Jesus' character, the authority of his words, the beauty of his spirit, the reality of his love, and, following such an acknowledgement, the complete abandonment of life to the enterprise of realizing these things in one's own life. Salvation, so received, is not a completed prize placed in our hands by a bargaining or an indulgent God, it is rather a progressively attained quality and measure of life - the very life of Jesus which we achieve as He achieved it by service, sacrifice, courage, unselfishness, and implicit obedience to the will of the Father.

I repeat that the dynamic motives which send the more thoughtful of men upon the quest of 'salvation' are to be found in the matchless personality of Christ which men may approximate with the aid of the divine Spirit; and in the suffering, yearning love of the Father God revealed in the Cross of Calvary. And so the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God", the "First-born of many brethren," has indeed served through nineteen centuries of time to mediate the blessings of God to man, to open for mankind the way of richest communion and fellowship with the Father. But the means by which this gracious mission has been accomplished is not to be explained in terms of the crudely materialistic legalism and commercialism which played so large a part in the sacrificial system of the Hebrew people during pre-Christian centuries and in the theology of the Christian Church through a large part of the past nineteen centuries. It must rather be explained in terms of that more adequate view of the character of God and of the

nature of the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ which the best of scientific and philosophical thought demands and can provide.

In conclusion we should observe that not only do the ancient ideas of propitiation and expiation as motives for sacrifice find a rich fulfilment in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for human sin, but likewise do the time-honored motives of 'gift' and 'communion'.
¹ Christ was God's supreme gift to men, and in turn the human Jesus, as the representative man, was humanity's surpassing gift to God. Human salvation, furthermore, requires the unreserved gift of the individual's life in consecration and service to God. The apostle Paul speaks of this human contribution to the process of salvation in well-known words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice
² holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."
³

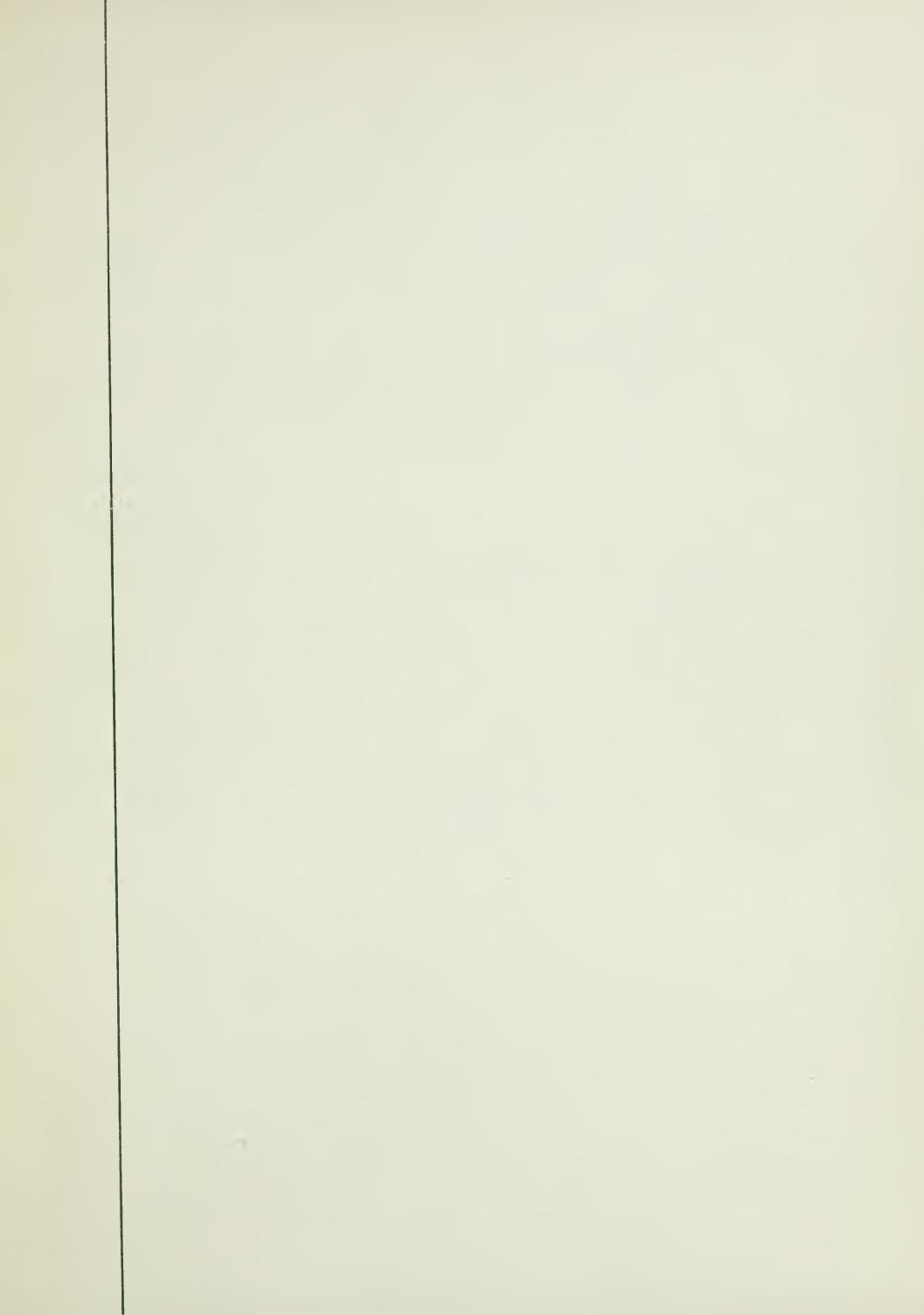
Then again, the idea of communion, which lay behind the ancient sacrificial meals, reaches its splendid spiritual climax in the Christian ordinance of Communion.
⁴ In this sacrament of thanksgiving and commemoration the believer partakes not of the literal flesh and blood of Christ, "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world", but by meditation and communion of spirit he comes into a mystical union with Him whereby the divine life in very truth becomes his life so that with the apostle he can say, "I no longer live, but
⁵ Christ liveth in me." In this sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is established not only fellowship and communion between God and man,

1 Cf. John 3:16; 2 Romans 12:1; 3 Also known as Lord's Supper.
4 Rev. 5:12; 5 Galatians 2:20.

but a richer fellowship is made possible among the human participants in the common meal. Thus the social and religious values of the earlier communion meal are not only conserved but immeasurably heightened in the Christian Communion.

The process of development in conceptions of moral and spiritual truth is always from the natural to the spiritual. Ideas vaguely foreshadowed in the practices of early times appear in clear-cut relief in the fuller light of later revelation. We have observed the working of this process very clearly, if very sketchily, in this paper. We marvel at the way mankind has moved from 'precedent to precedent', ever drawing nearer to the heart of truth. We stand in awe and reverence before a God who works through the unending processes of time toward the perfect truth which has eternity in its heart.

We cannot help but feel that the divine processes of revelation and evolution have not run their full course but will continue their ministry of enlarging and enriching the life of mankind through all time to come.





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